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Crile denies he 'coached' ex-CIA agent interviewed twice in CBS Vietnam report

NEW YORK (AP)—CBS producer George Crile denied yesterday that he "coached" an ex-CIA agent who supported the thesis of the network's 1982 documentary, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

Mr. Crile was on the witness stand for the fourth day in the \$120 million libel suit filed against CBS by retired Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. troops in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968.

The documentary asserted that the general suppressed reports of rising enemy troop strength in 1967 in an effort to make it appear that his forces were winning the war.

Gen. Westmoreland's lawyer, Dan M. Burt, questioned Mr. Crile closely about his dealings with George Allen, an ex-intelligence analyst who appeared on the broadcast and supported the charges against Gen. Westmoreland.

Mr. Crile acknowledged that he interviewed Mr. Allen twice and allowed him to view excerpts of interviews with other witnesses who supported the CBS story.

A CBS internal report concluded in Sep-

tember 1982 that the double interview and the screening of other interviews with Mr. Allen violated the network's own standards, which require spontaneous and unrehearsed questioning. The jury, however, was not told of the CBS findings.

Instead, jurors heard Mr. Crile defend his actions when Mr. Burt asked him, "You showed [Mr. Allen] the interviews in order to coach him, didn't you?"

"Mr. Burt," Mr. Crile replied, "George Allen was one of the most distinguished public servants I have ever known. He had served his country well. Nobody was going to coach him."

Mr. Allen, said Mr. Crile, was nervous about discussing his intelligence work and did not want to appear critical of the CIA as an institution. At one point Mr. Crile acknowledged that Mr. Allen's nervousness at the first interview prompted the second session, but in a later answer he said he hoped to extract more information and clearer answers.